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(54) **LED DRIVER, LED DRIVING METHOD AND CONTROLLER FOR LED DRIVER**

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USPC 345/76–83, 211–213; 315/171, 186, 315/291; 323/271, 285

See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A LED driver, a LED driving method and a controller for LED driver are discussed in the present invention. The LED driver detects the phase of the input signal which is phase cut by a triac from a pre-E-transformer. The LED driver regulates the current flowing through the LED strings by varying the phase of the input signal.

11 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets

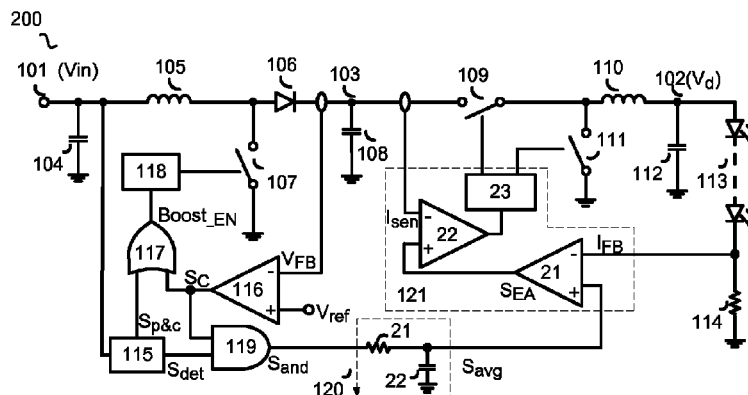


FIG. 1

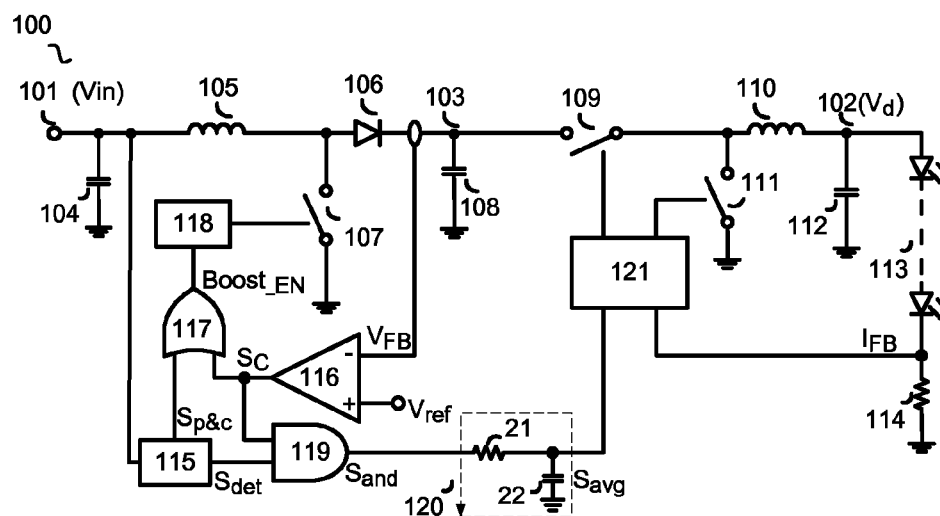


FIG. 2

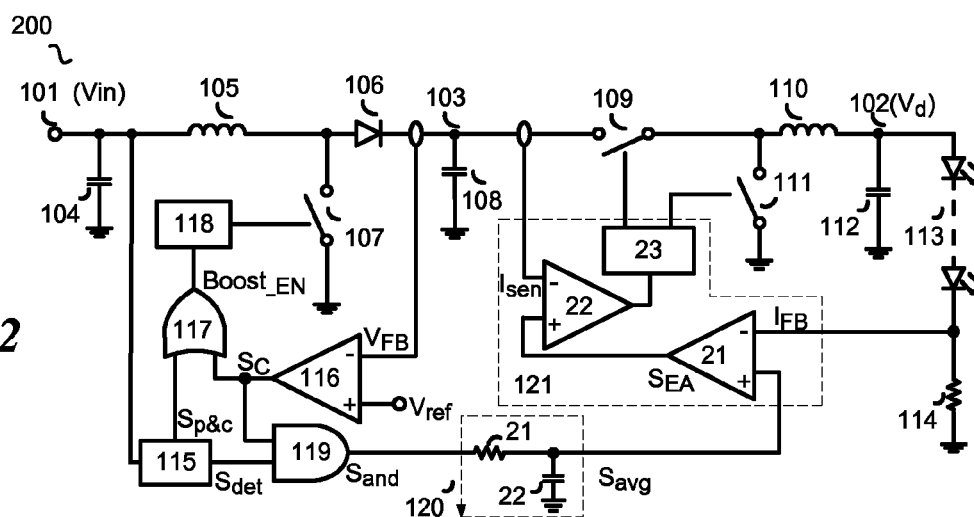
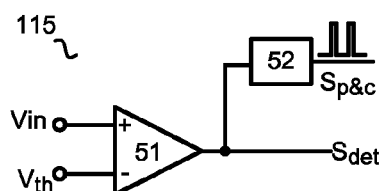


FIG. 3



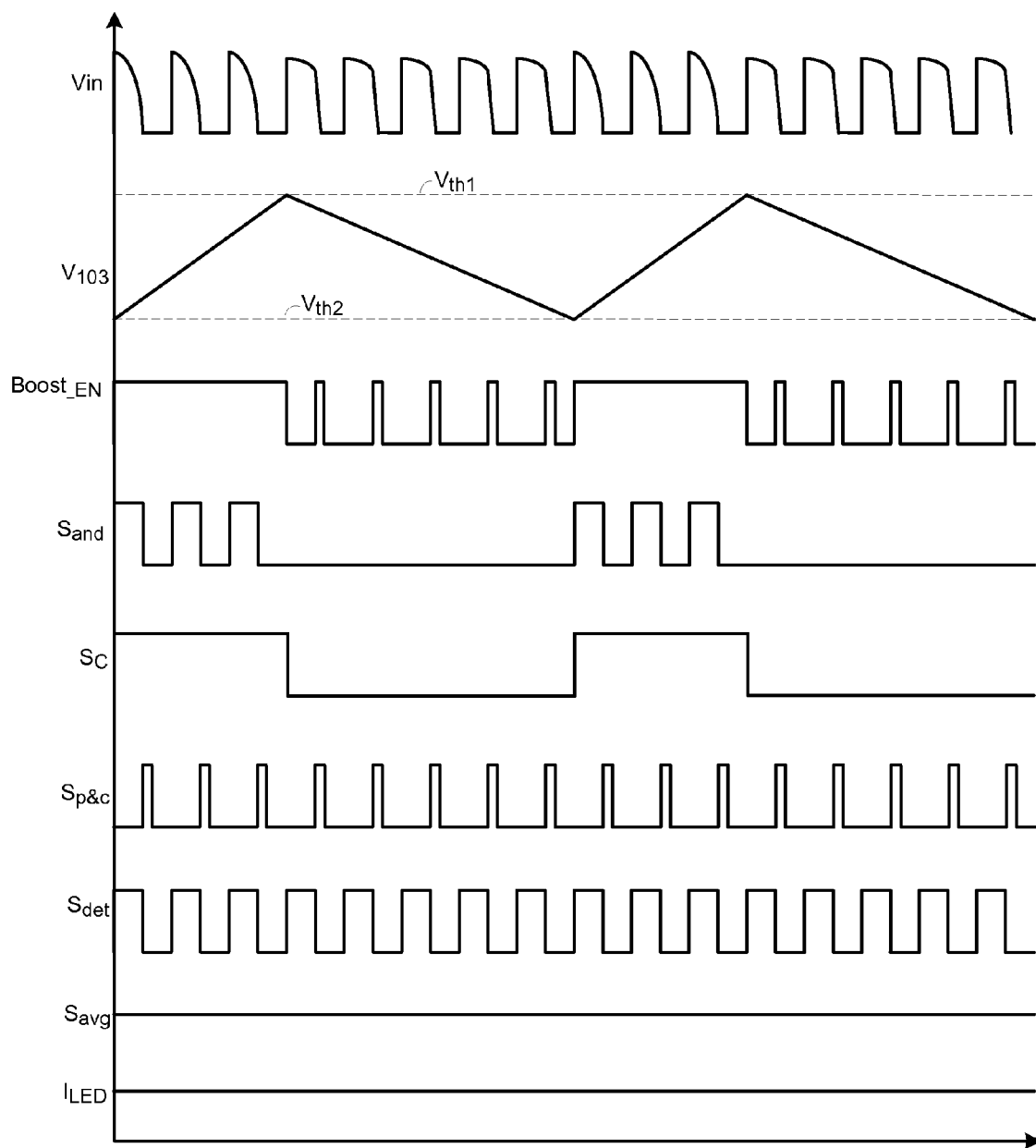
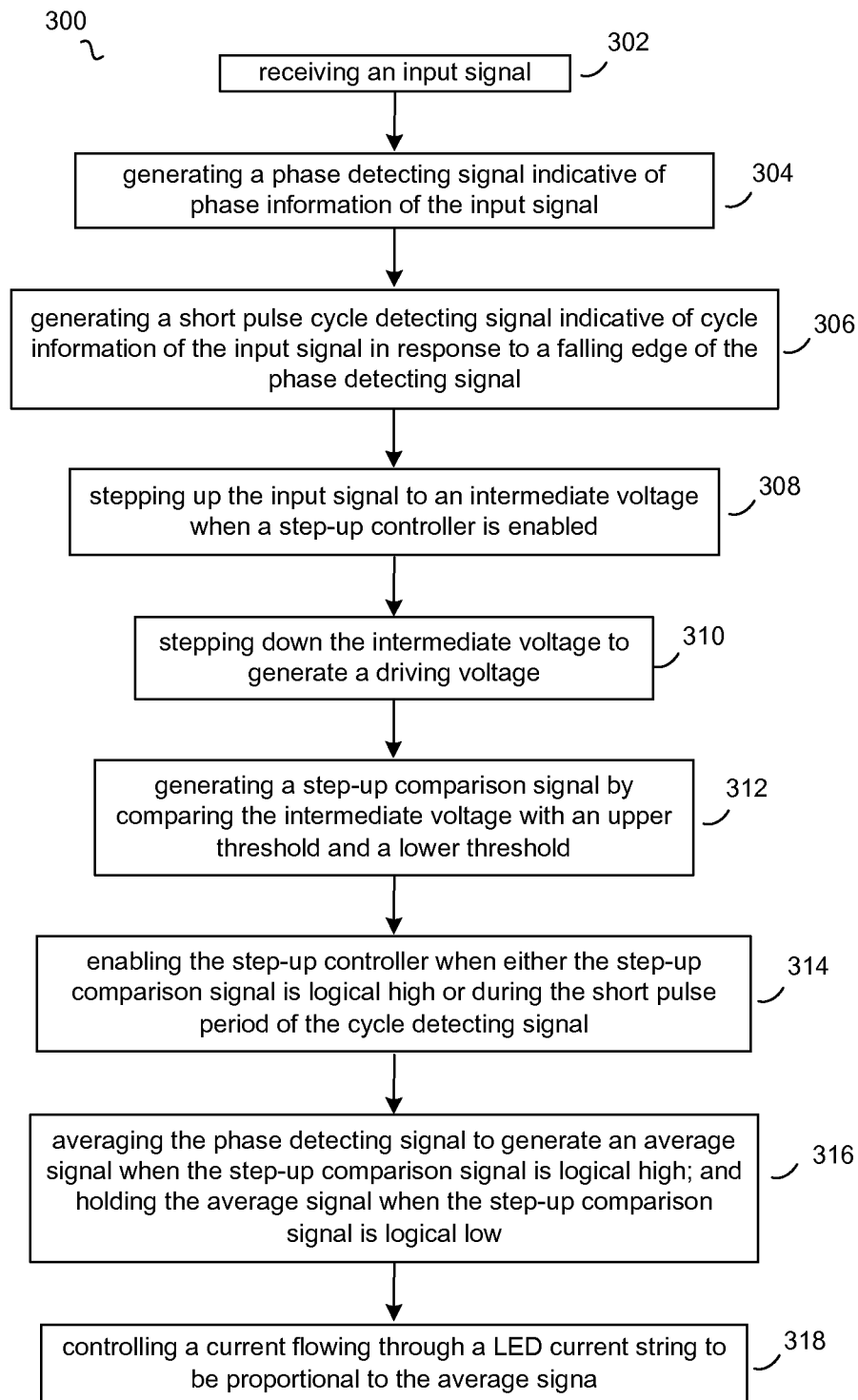


FIG. 4

**FIG. 5**

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**LED DRIVER, LED DRIVING METHOD AND
CONTROLLER FOR LED DRIVER****CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATION(S)**

This application claims priority to and the benefit of Chinese Patent Application No. 201310717707.X, filed Dec. 23, 2013, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to electronic circuits, more specifically, the present invention relates to LED (lighting emitting diode) drivers.

BACKGROUND

E-transformers are widely used in electronic circuits because of small volume, light weight, low cost, high converting efficiency and good reliability. An E-transformer firstly converts an AC input voltage to a DC voltage, and then converts the DC voltage to a high frequency lower AC voltage via an oscillator.

One application of the E-transformer is to provide driving for LED strings. Prior art using a boost PFC (power factor correction) circuit to drive LED strings, and using a triac to execute phase cut to realize LED dimming. However, conventional E-transformers are designed for halogen lamps, but LEDs have a much lower power level than halogen lamps, so using conventional E-transformers to drive LED may lead to flicker.

SUMMARY

It is an object of the present invention to provide an improved LED driver, which solves the above problems.

In accomplishing the above and other objects, there has been provided, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, a control circuit used in a LED driver, the LED driver includes an input port configured to receive an input signal, an output port configured to provide a driving voltage to a LED string, an intermediate node, a step-up stage having a first power switch coupled between the input port and the intermediate node, and a step-down stage having a second power switch and a third power switch coupled between the intermediate node and the output port, the control circuit comprising: a phase detector, having an input terminal coupled to the input port to receive the input signal, a first output terminal configured to generate a phase detecting signal indicative of phase information of the input signal, and a second output terminal configured to generate a cycle detecting signal indicative of cycle information of the input signal, wherein the cycle detecting signal is a short pulse signal; a step-up comparator, having a first input terminal configured to receive a reference signal, a second input terminal configured to receive a voltage feedback signal indicative of a voltage at the Intermediate node, and an output terminal configured to generate a step-up comparison signal based on the reference signal and the voltage feedback signal; a logical OR unit, having a first input terminal coupled to the second output terminal of the phase detector to receive the cycle detecting signal, a second input terminal coupled to the output terminal of the step-up comparator to receive the step-up comparison signal, and an output terminal configured to generate a step-up enable

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signal by executing logical OR operation on the cycle detecting signal and the step-up comparison signal; a step-up controller, coupled to the logical OR unit to receive the step-up enable signal, to get enabled or disabled by the step-up enable signal, and to generate a step-up control signal, the step-up control signal being used to control the first power switch; a logical AND unit, having a first input terminal coupled to the first output terminal of the phase detector to receive the phase detecting signal, a second input terminal coupled to the step-up comparator to receive the step-up comparison signal, and an output terminal configured to generate a logical AND signal by executing logical AND operation on the phase detecting signal and the step-up comparison signal; an average circuit, coupled to the output terminal of the logical AND unit to receive the logical AND signal and to generate an average signal; and a step-down controller, having a first input terminal configured to receive a LED current sense signal indicative of a current flowing through the LED string, a second input terminal coupled to the average circuit to receive the average signal, and an output terminal configured to generate a step-down control signal to control the second power switch and the third power switch.

In addition, there has been provided, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, a LED driver, comprising: an input port, configured to receive an input signal, wherein the input signal is a phase cut voltage from a pre-E-transformer, the pre-E-transformer is with triac; an output port, configured to provide a driving voltage; an Intermediate node; an input capacitor, coupled between the input port and a reference ground; a first inductor and a diode, series coupled between the input port and the Intermediate node; a first power switch, coupled between the reference ground and the conjunction node of the first inductor and the diode; an Intermediate capacitor, coupled between the Intermediate node and the reference ground; a second power switch and a second inductor, series coupled between the Intermediate node and the output port; a third power switch, coupled between the reference ground and the conjunction node of the second power switch and the second inductor; an output capacitor, coupled between the output port and the reference ground; a LED string and a sense resistor, series coupled between the output port and the reference ground; a phase detector, having an input terminal coupled to the input port to receive the input signal, a first output terminal configured to generate a phase detecting signal indicative of phase information of the input signal, and a second output terminal configured to generate a cycle detecting signal indicative of cycle information of the input signal, wherein the cycle detecting signal is a short pulse signal; a step-up comparator, having a first input terminal configured to receive a reference signal, a second input terminal configured to receive a voltage feedback signal indicative of a voltage at the Intermediate node, and an output terminal configured to generate a step-up comparison signal based on the reference signal and the voltage feedback signal; a logical OR unit, having a first input terminal coupled to the second output terminal of the phase detector to receive the cycle detecting signal, a second input terminal coupled to the output terminal of the step-up comparator to receive the step-up comparison signal, and an output terminal configured to generate a step-up enable signal by executing logical OR operation on the cycle detecting signal and the step-up comparison signal; a step-up controller, coupled to the logical OR unit to receive the step-up enable signal, to get enabled or disabled by the step-up enable signal, and to generate a step-up control signal, the step-up control

signal being used to control the first power switch; a logical AND unit, having a first input terminal coupled to the first output terminal of the phase detector to receive the phase detecting signal, a second input terminal coupled to the step-up comparator to receive the step-up comparison signal, and an output terminal configured to generate a logical AND signal by executing logical AND operation on the phase detecting signal and the step-up comparison signal; an average circuit, coupled to the output terminal of the logical AND unit to receive the logical AND signal and to generate an average signal; and a step-down controller, having a first input terminal coupled to the conjunction node of the LED string and the current sense resistor to receive a LED current sense signal indicative of a current flowing through the LED string, a second input terminal coupled to the average circuit to receive the average signal, and an output terminal configured to generate a step-down control signal to control the second power switch and the third power switch.

Furthermore, there has been provided, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, a LED driving method, comprising: receiving an input signal, the input signal being a phase cut voltage from a pre-E-transformer, the pre-E-transformer being with triac; generating a phase detecting signal indicative of phase information of the input signal; generating a short pulse cycle detecting signal indicative of cycle information of the input signal in response to a falling edge of the phase detecting signal; stepping up the input signal to an intermediate voltage when a step-up controller is enabled; stepping down the intermediate voltage to generate a driving voltage; generating a step-up comparison signal by comparing the intermediate voltage with an upper threshold and a lower threshold; enabling the step-up controller when either the step-up comparison signal is logical high or during the short pulse period of the cycle detecting signal; averaging the phase detecting signal to generate an average signal when the step-up comparison signal is logical high; and holding the average signal when the step-up comparison signal is logical low; and controlling a current flowing through a LED current string to be proportional to the average signal.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 schematically shows a LED driver **100** in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 schematically shows a LED driver **200** with a schematic circuit configuration of the step-down controller **121** in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 3 schematically shows a circuit configuration of the phase detector **115** in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 4 schematically shows the timing waveforms of the input signal V_{in} , the voltage V_{103} at the intermediate node **103**, the step-up enable signal $Boost_EN$, the logical AND signal S_{and} , the step-up comparison signal S_C , the cycle detecting signal $S_{p\&c}$, the phase detecting signal S_{det} , the average signal S_{avg} , and the current I_{LED} flowing through the LED string of the LED driver **100** in FIG. 1 and the LED driver **200** in FIG. 2.

FIG. 5 schematic shows a flowchart **300** of a LED driving method in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

The use of the similar reference label in different drawings indicates the same of like components.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Embodiments of circuits for LED driver and LED driving method are described in detail herein. In the following

description, some specific details, such as example circuits for these circuit components, are included to provide a thorough understanding of embodiments of the invention. One skilled in relevant art will recognize, however, that the invention can be practiced without one or more specific details, or with other methods, components, materials, etc.

The following embodiments and aspects are illustrated in conjunction with circuits and methods that are meant to be exemplary and illustrative. In various embodiments, the above problem has been reduced or eliminated, while other embodiments are directed to other improvements.

FIG. 1 schematically shows a LED driver **100** in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. In the example of FIG. 1, the LED driver **100** comprises: an input port **101**, configured to receive an input signal V_{in} , wherein the input signal V_{in} is a phase cut voltage from a pre-E-transformer with triac; an output port **102**, configured to provide a driving voltage V_d ; an Intermediate node **103**; an input capacitor **104**, coupled between the input port **101** and a reference ground; a first inductor **105** and a diode **106**, series coupled between the input port **101** and the Intermediate node **103**; a first power switch **107**, coupled between the reference ground and the conjunction node of the first inductor **105** and the diode **106**; an Intermediate capacitor **108**, coupled between the Intermediate node **103** and the reference ground; a second power switch **109** and a second inductor **110**, series coupled between the Intermediate node **103** and the output port **102**; a third power switch **111**, coupled between the reference ground and the conjunction node of the second power switch **109** and the second inductor **110**; an output capacitor **112**, coupled between the output port **102** and the reference ground; a LED string **113** and a sense resistor **114**, series coupled between the output port **102** and the reference ground; a phase detector **115**, having an input terminal coupled to the input port **101** to receive the input signal, a first output terminal configured to generate a phase detecting signal S_{det} indicative of phase information of the input signal V_{in} , and a second output terminal configured to generate a cycle detecting signal $S_{p\&c}$ indicative of cycle information of the input signal V_{in} , wherein the cycle detecting signal $S_{p\&c}$ is a short pulse signal (e.g., the short pulse has a high level lasting for 100 ns or less); a step-up comparator **116**, having a first input terminal configured to receive a reference signal V_{ref} , a second input terminal configured to receive a voltage feedback signal V_{FB} indicative of a voltage at the Intermediate node **103**, and an output terminal configured to generate a step-up comparison signal S_C based on the reference signal V_{ref} and the voltage feedback signal V_{FB} ; a logical OR unit **117**, having a first input terminal coupled to the second output terminal of the phase detector **115** to receive the cycle detecting signal $S_{p\&c}$, a second input terminal coupled to the output terminal of the step-up comparator **116** to receive the step-up comparison signal S_C , and an output terminal configured to generate a step-up enable signal $Boost_EN$ by executing logical OR operation on the cycle detecting signal $S_{p\&c}$ and the step-up comparison signal S_C ; a step-up controller **118**, coupled to the logical OR unit **117** to receive the step-up enable signal $Boost_EN$, to get enabled or disabled by the step-up enable signal $Boost_EN$, and to generate a step-up control signal, the step-up control signal being used to control the first power switch **107**; a logical AND unit **119**, having a first input terminal coupled to the first output terminal of the phase detector **115** to receive the phase detecting signal S_{det} , a second input terminal coupled to the step-up comparator **116** to receive the step-up comparison signal S_C , and an output terminal configured to generate a

logical AND signal S_{and} by executing logical AND operation on the phase detecting signal S_{det} and the step-up comparison signal S_C ; an average circuit **120**, coupled to the output terminal of the logical AND unit **119** to receive the logical AND signal S_{and} and to generate an average signal S_{avg} ; and a step-down controller **121**, having a first input terminal coupled to the conjunction node of the LED string **113** and the current sense resistor **114** to receive a LED current sense signal I_{FB} indicative of a current flowing through the LED string **113**, a second input terminal coupled to the average circuit **120** to receive the average signal S_{avg} , and an output terminal configured to generate a step-down control signal to control the second power switch **109** and the third power switch **111**, so as to regulate the current flowing through the LED string **113** to be proportional to the average signal S_{avg} .

As can be seen, in the example of FIG. 1, the first inductor **105**, the diode **106**, the first power switch **107** and the intermediate capacitor **108** constitute a typical boost topology; the second power switch **109**, the second inductor **110**, the third power switch **111** and the output capacitor **112** constitute a typical buck topology; the phase detector **115**, the step-up comparator **116**, the logical OR unit **117**, the step-up controller **118**, the logical AND unit **119**, the average circuit **120** and the step-down controller **121** constitute the control circuit of the LED driver. That is, the LED driver **100** includes an input port **101** configured to receive an input signal V_{in} , an output port **102** configured to provide a driving voltage V_d to a LED string **113**, an intermediate node **103**, a step-up stage having a first power switch **107**, a step-down stage having a second power switch **109** and a third power switch **111**, and a control circuit, wherein the step-up stage is coupled between the input port **101** and the intermediate node **103**, and the step-down stage is coupled between the intermediate node **103** and the output port **102**.

FIG. 2 schematically shows a LED driver **200** with a schematic circuit configuration of the step-down controller **121** in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. In the example of FIG. 2, the step-down controller **121** comprises: an error amplifier **21**, having a first input terminal coupled to the conjunction node of the LED string **113** and the current sense resistor **114** to receive the LED current sense signal I_{FB} , a second input terminal coupled to the average circuit **120** to receive the average signal S_{avg} , and an output terminal configured to generate an error amplified signal S_{EA} ; a step-down comparator **22**, having a first input terminal coupled to the output terminal of the error amplifier **21** to receive the error amplified signal S_{EA} , a second input terminal configured to receive an inductor current sense signal I_{sen} indicative of a current flowing through the second inductor **110** (one skilled in the art should realize that this inductor current sense signal I_{sen} is also indicative of a current flowing through the second power switch **109**), and an output terminal configured to generate a step-down comparison signal; and a control and logical circuit **23**, coupled to the step-down comparator **22** to receive the step-down comparison signal, and to generate the step-down control signal based on the step-down comparison signal.

In one embodiment, the average circuit **120** comprises an average resistor **31** and an average capacitor **32** coupled in series between the output terminal of the logical AND unit **119** and the reference ground, wherein the average signal S_{avg} is generated at the conjunction node of the average resistor **31** and the average capacitor **32**.

FIG. 3 schematically shows a circuit configuration of the phase detector **115** in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. In the example of FIG. 3, the phase

detector **115** comprises: a phase comparator **51**, having a first input terminal configured to receive a threshold signal V_{th} , a second input terminal configured to receive the input signal V_{in} , and an output terminal configured to generate the phase detecting signal S_{det} based on the threshold signal V_{th} and the input signal V_{in} ; and a short pulse circuit **52**, coupled to the output terminal of the phase comparator **51** to receive the phase detecting signal S_{det} , and to generate the cycle detecting signal $S_{p\&c}$ with a short pulse in response to a falling edge of the phase detecting signal S_{det} .

In one embodiment, the threshold V_{th} has a voltage level around 0.1V.

In one embodiment, the step-up comparator **116** comprises a hysteresis comparator having a hysteresis V_{hys} , i.e., the step-up comparator **116** has an upper threshold $V_{th1} = V_{ref} + V_{hys}$, and a lower threshold $V_{th2} = V_{ref} - V_{hys}$.

The operation principle of the LED driver **100/200** would be discussed in the following in reference to FIG. 4. When the LED drivers **100** and **200** are in operation, if the voltage V_{103} at the intermediate node **103** is lower than the upper threshold V_{th1} of the step-up comparator **116**, the step-up comparison signal S_C is logical high, so as the step-up enable signal $Boost_EN$ provided by the logical OR unit **117**. Then the step-up controller **118** is enabled, and provides the step-up control signal to control the operation of the first power switch **107**. Accordingly, the voltage V_{103} at the intermediate node **103** goes up. When the voltage V_{103} at the intermediate node **103** reaches the upper threshold V_{th1} of the step-up comparator **116**, the step-up comparison signal S_C turns to logical low. As a result, the step-up enable signal $Boost_EN$ provided by the logical OR unit **117** is determined by the cycle detecting signal $S_{p\&c}$. At the phase detector **115**, the phase detector **115** compares the input signal V_{in} with the threshold signal V_{th} . When the input signal V_{in} is higher than zero (i.e., the non-phase-cut part of the input signal V_{in}), the phase detecting signal S_{det} is logical high; when the input signal V_{in} is zero (i.e. the phase-cut part of the input signal V_{in}), the phase detecting signal S_{det} is logical low. Thus, there's a falling edge of the phase detecting signal S_{det} from the end of the non-phase-cut part to start of the phase cut part of the input signal V_{in} . The short pulse circuit **52** generates the cycle detecting signal $S_{p\&c}$ with a short pulse in response to the falling edge of the phase detecting signal S_{det} . The logical OR unit **117** also generates the step-up enable signal $Boost_EN$ with a short pulse, to enable the step-up controller **118** and the first power switch **107** in the short pulse time period. Accordingly, the input signal V_{in} is discharged. After the short pulse time period, the step-up controller **118** is disabled, and the first power switch **107** is idle. Then the voltage V_{103} at the intermediate node **103** starts to decrease. When the voltage V_{103} at the intermediate node **103** decreases to be lower than the lower threshold V_{th2} of the step-up comparator **116**, the step-up comparison signal S_C turns to logical high; and the step-up controller **118** is re-enabled, to control the operation of the first power switch **107**.

At the logical AND unit **119**, the logical AND unit **119** executes the logical AND operation on the phase detecting signal S_{det} and the step-up comparison signal S_C , to generate the logical AND signal S_{and} , which is averaged by the average circuit **120** to get the average signal S_{avg} . Then the average signal S_{avg} is delivered to the step-down controller **121**, so as to regulate the current flowing through the LED string **113** to be proportional to the average signal S_{avg} .

Several embodiments of the foregoing LED driver provide better LED current regulation in the E-transformer application compared to conventional technique discussed

above. Unlike the conventional technique, several embodiments of the foregoing LED driver detect the phase of the input signal provided by the pre-E-transformer. If the phase of the input signal is varied, the phase detecting signal is varied, so does the average signal, and then the current flowing through the LED string is adjusted to the desired value. That is, several embodiments of the foregoing LED driver regulate the current flowing through the LED string by varying the phase of the input signal.

FIG. 5 schematic shows a flowchart 300 of a LED driving method in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The LED driving method comprising:

Step 302, receiving an input signal, the input signal being a phase cut voltage from a pre-E-transformer, the pre-E-transformer being with triac.

Step 304, generating a phase detecting signal indicative of phase information of the input signal.

Step 306, generating a short pulse cycle detecting signal indicative of cycle information of the input signal in response to a falling edge of the phase detecting signal.

Step 308, stepping up the input signal to an intermediate voltage when a step-up controller is enabled.

Step 310, stepping down the intermediate voltage to generate a driving voltage.

Step 312, generating a step-up comparison signal by comparing the intermediate voltage with an upper threshold and a lower threshold.

Step 314, enabling the step-up controller when either the step-up comparison signal is logical high or during the short pulse period of the cycle detecting signal.

Step 316, averaging the phase detecting signal to generate an average signal when the step-up comparison signal is logical high; and holding the average signal when the step-up comparison signal is logical low. And

Step 318, controlling a current flowing through a LED current string to be proportional to the average signal.

It is to be understood in these letters patent that the meaning of "A" is coupled to "B" is that either A and B are connected to each other as described below, or that, although A and B may not be connected to each other as described above, there is nevertheless a device or circuit that is connected to both A and B. This device or circuit may include active or passive circuit elements, where the passive circuit elements may be distributed or lumped-parameter in nature. For example, A may be connected to a circuit element that in turn is connected to B.

This written description uses examples to disclose the invention, including the best mode, and also to enable a person skilled in the art to make and use the invention. The patentable scope of the invention may include other examples that occur to those skilled in the art.

We claim:

1. A control circuit used in a LED driver, the LED driver includes an input port configured to receive an input signal, an output port configured to provide a driving voltage to a LED string, an intermediate node, a step-up stage having a first power switch coupled between the input port and the intermediate node, and a step-down stage having a second power switch and a third power switch coupled between the intermediate node and the output port, the control circuit comprising:

a phase detector, having an input terminal coupled to the input port to receive the input signal, a first output terminal configured to generate a phase detecting signal indicative of phase information of the input signal, and a second output terminal configured to generate a cycle

detecting signal indicative of cycle information of the input signal, wherein the cycle detecting signal is a short pulse signal;

a step-up comparator, having a first input terminal configured to receive a reference signal, a second input terminal configured to receive a voltage feedback signal indicative of a voltage at the Intermediate node, and an output terminal configured to generate a step-up comparison signal based on the reference signal and the voltage feedback signal;

a logical OR unit, having a first input terminal coupled to the second output terminal of the phase detector to receive the cycle detecting signal, a second input terminal coupled to the output terminal of the step-up comparator to receive the step-up comparison signal, and an output terminal configured to generate a step-up enable signal by executing logical OR operation on the cycle detecting signal and the step-up comparison signal;

a step-up controller, coupled to the logical OR unit to receive the step-up enable signal, to get enabled or disabled by the step-up enable signal, and to generate a step-up control signal, the step-up control signal being used to control the first power switch;

a logical AND unit, having a first input terminal coupled to the first output terminal of the phase detector to receive the phase detecting signal, a second input terminal coupled to the step-up comparator to receive the step-up comparison signal, and an output terminal configured to generate a logical AND signal by executing logical AND operation on the phase detecting signal and the step-up comparison signal;

an average circuit, coupled to the output terminal of the logical AND unit to receive the logical AND signal and to generate an average signal; and

a step-down controller, having a first input terminal configured to receive a LED current sense signal indicative of a current flowing through the LED string, a second input terminal coupled to the average circuit to receive the average signal, and an output terminal configured to generate a step-down control signal to control the second power switch and the third power switch.

2. The control circuit of claim 1, wherein the step-down controller comprises:

an error amplifier, having a first input terminal configured to receive the LED current sense signal, a second input terminal coupled to the average circuit to receive the average signal, and an output terminal configured to generate an error amplified signal;

a step-down comparator, having a first input terminal coupled to the output terminal of the error amplifier to receive the error amplified signal, a second input terminal configured to receive an inductor current sense signal indicative of a current flowing through the second power switch, and an output terminal configured to generate a step-down comparison signal; and a control and logical circuit, coupled to the step-down comparator to receive the step-down comparison signal, and to generate the step-down control signal based on the step-down comparison signal.

3. The control circuit of claim 1, the average circuit comprises an average resistor and an average capacitor coupled in series between the output terminal of the logical AND unit and the reference ground, wherein the average signal is generated at the conjunction node of the average resistor and the average capacitor.

4. The control circuit of claim 1, wherein the phase detector comprises:

- a phase comparator, having a first input terminal configured to receive a threshold signal, a second input terminal configured to receive the input signal, and an output terminal configured to generate the phase detecting signal based on the threshold signal and the input signal; and
- a short pulse circuit, coupled to the output terminal of the phase comparator to receive the phase detecting signal, and to generate the cycle detecting signal with a short pulse in response to a falling edge of the phase detecting signal.

5. The control circuit of claim 1, wherein the step-up comparator comprises a hysteresis comparator.

6. A LED driver, comprising:

- an input port, configured to receive an input signal, wherein the input signal is a phase cut voltage from a pre-E-transformer, the pre-E-transformer is with triac;
- an output port, configured to provide a driving voltage;
- an Intermediate node;

- an input capacitor, coupled between the input port and a reference ground;

- a first inductor and a diode, series coupled between the input port and the Intermediate node;

- a first power switch, coupled between the reference ground and the conjunction node of the first inductor and the diode;

- an Intermediate capacitor, coupled between the Intermediate node and the reference ground;

- a second power switch and a second inductor, series coupled between the Intermediate node and the output port;

- a third power switch, coupled between the reference ground and the conjunction node of the second power switch and the second inductor;

- an output capacitor, coupled between the output port and the reference ground;

- a LED string and a sense resistor, series coupled between the output port and the reference ground;

- a phase detector, having an input terminal coupled to the input port to receive the input signal, a first output terminal configured to generate a phase detecting signal indicative of phase information of the input signal, and a second output terminal configured to generate a cycle detecting signal indicative of cycle information of the input signal, wherein the cycle detecting signal is a short pulse signal;

- a step-up comparator, having a first input terminal configured to receive a reference signal, a second input terminal configured to receive a voltage feedback signal indicative of a voltage at the Intermediate node, and an output terminal configured to generate a step-up comparison signal based on the reference signal and the voltage feedback signal;

- a logical OR unit, having a first input terminal coupled to the second output terminal of the phase detector to receive the cycle detecting signal, a second input terminal coupled to the output terminal of the step-up comparator to receive the step-up comparison signal, and an output terminal configured to generate a step-up enable signal by executing logical OR operation on the cycle detecting signal and the step-up comparison signal;

- a step-up controller, coupled to the logical OR unit to receive the step-up enable signal, to get enabled or disabled by the step-up enable signal, and to generate

- a step-up control signal, the step-up control signal being used to control the first power switch;

- a logical AND unit, having a first input terminal coupled to the first output terminal of the phase detector to receive the phase detecting signal, a second input terminal coupled to the step-up comparator to receive the step-up comparison signal, and an output terminal configured to generate a logical AND signal by executing logical AND operation on the phase detecting signal and the step-up comparison signal;

- an average circuit, coupled to the output terminal of the logical AND unit to receive the logical AND signal and to generate an average signal; and

- a step-down controller, having a first input terminal coupled to the conjunction node of the LED string and the current sense resistor to receive a LED current sense signal indicative of a current flowing through the LED string, a second input terminal coupled to the average circuit to receive the average signal, and an output terminal configured to generate a step-down control signal to control the second power switch and the third power switch.

7. The LED driver of claim 6, wherein the step-down controller comprises:

- an error amplifier, having a first input terminal coupled to the conjunction node of the LED string and the current sense resistor to receive the LED current sense signal, a second input terminal coupled to the average circuit to receive the average signal, and an output terminal configured to generate an error amplified signal;

- a step-down comparator, having a first input terminal coupled to the output terminal of the error amplifier to receive the error amplified signal, a second input terminal configured to receive an inductor current sense signal indicative of a current flowing through the second inductor, and an output terminal configured to generate a step-down comparison signal; and

- a control and logical circuit, coupled to the step-down comparator to receive the step-down comparison signal, and to generate the step-down control signal based on the step-down comparison signal.

8. The LED driver of claim 6, the average circuit comprises an average resistor and an average capacitor coupled in series between the output terminal of the logical AND unit and the reference ground, wherein the average signal is generated at the conjunction node of the average resistor and the average capacitor.

9. The LED driver of claim 6, wherein the phase detector comprises:

- a phase comparator, having a first input terminal configured to receive a threshold signal, a second input terminal configured to receive the input signal, and an output terminal configured to generate the phase detecting signal based on the threshold signal and the input signal; and

- a short pulse circuit, coupled to the output terminal of the phase comparator to receive the phase detecting signal, and to generate the cycle detecting signal with a short pulse in response to a falling edge of the phase detecting signal.

10. The LED driver of claim 6, wherein the step-up comparator comprises a hysteresis comparator.

11. A LED driving method, comprising:

- receiving an input signal, the input signal being a phase cut voltage from a pre-E-transformer, the pre-E-transformer being with triac;

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generating a phase detecting signal indicative of phase
information of the input signal;
generating a short pulse cycle detecting signal indicative
of cycle information of the input signal in response to
a falling edge of the phase detecting signal; 5
stepping up the input signal to an intermediate voltage
when a step-up controller is enabled;
stepping down the intermediate voltage to generate a
driving voltage;
generating a step-up comparison signal by comparing the 10
intermediate voltage with an upper threshold and a
lower threshold;
enabling the step-up controller when either the step-up
comparison signal is logical high or during the short
pulse period of the cycle detecting signal; 15
averaging the phase detecting signal to generate an aver-
age signal when the step-up comparison signal is
logical high; and holding the average signal when the
step-up comparison signal is logical low; and
controlling a current flowing through a LED current string 20
to be proportional to the average signal.

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